Halima Benzoukh. Cohesive Ties in English at a Glance // Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. T 3, №3, 2017

3

ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ
РАЗДЕЛ I. ГЕРМАНСКИЕ ЯЗЫКИ

Dr. Halima Benzoukh | **COHESIVE TIES IN ENGLISH AT A GLANCE**

Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, Algeria
E-mail: halimabenzoukh@gmail.com

Abstract. Tackling relations of meaning and references in a text is often related to cohesion. A text can be cohesive if its units are bound together with explicit or implicit relations. Cohesion is often defined as the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. Cohesion is also considered as the formal linkage between an element of a discourse or a text and another element in the same discourse or text. The units of a cohesive text are not just a random set of sentences. The connectivity of the elements of a text is mainly a matter of reference and meaning. The present paper aims at shedding light on grammatical and lexical cohesion in English. Cohesion can be expressed through the stratal organisation of language that consists of three levels of coding which are meanings of the semantic system, the wording of the lexico-grammatical system, and the phonological and orthographic systems. In fact, meaning is put into wording and wording into sound or writing. Wording is the lexicogrammatical form in which the more general meaning is expressed through grammar and the more specific meaning through vocabulary. Hence, cohesion is expressed through grammar and vocabulary. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution and ellipsis; lexical cohesion is expressed by reiteration and collocation. Conjunctions are on the borderline between grammatical and lexical cohesion.
Key words: grammatical cohesion; lexical cohesion; reference; substitution; ellipsis; conjunction; reiteration; collocation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leech and Short (1981) maintain that cohesion is an important part in the making of a text. However, it is not always a significant feature of literary style (ibid.). They claim that cohesion in literary fiction is a background to make noteworthy style markers, and they create the analogy of the framework which makes a building hang together and which is occasionally the most important part of its architecture.

Further, cohesion is embodied in the concept of text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). It is so important, but not sufficient to create a text. It is just one part of the textual or, text-forming component of the linguistic system that creates a text; the textual component is "the set of resources in a language whose semantic function is that of expressing relationship to the environment" (ibid: 299). What characterizes the text is the meaning derived from this textual component. The role of cohesion within a text is to express the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another. This continuity, provided by cohesion, enables the reader to supply the missing pieces which are not present in the text and which are essential to its interpretation (Van Dijk, 1972).

2. GRAMMATICAL COHESION

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), grammatical cohesion refers to a combination of terms or sentences that form grammatical aspects. It includes features of reference, substitution, ellipses and conjunction.

Halima Benzoukh. Cohesive Ties in English at a Glance // Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. T 3, №3, 2017

4

2.1 REFERENCE

There are certain items in any language which cannot be interpreted semantically in their own right rather they make reference to something else within the text for their interpretation. Reference, in this sense, is a cohesive device that allows the reader/hearer to trace participants, events, entities, etc. in texts (Leech & Short, 1981). This mechanism relates one element of the text to another one for its interpretation, which can be present or absent (exophoric and endophoric references) (ibid.). It can be exophoric (refers outside the text to the context; e.g. *Jane Eyre – Reader, I married him*) or endophoric (refers within the text). The latter embraces anaphoric references (referring back) and cataphoric ones (referring forwards). For example:

- Anaphoric reference (used frequently):
- *David said that he was going home*
- Cataphoric reference (used less frequently for particular effects, more characteristic of literary texts, for instance in building suspense):
- *I couldn't believe it – the house had been destroyed!*

2.2 SUBSTITUTION

Substitution is the replacement of one item by another (Van Dijk, 1972). It is a relation between linguistic items such as words or phrases. The substitute item has the same structural function as that for which it substitutes. A substitute item may function as a noun, or a verb, or a clause (Crystal, 1995):

a- Nominal
- *Could you give me another pencil? This one is broken.*
b- Verbal
A. *I saw the new film of Nicolas Cage last month.*
B. *So did I*
c- Clausal
A. *Are you going to the movies on Saturday?*
B. *I think so.*

2.3 ELLIPSIS

Ellipsis is 'substitution by zero' (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). This device has three types, nominal, verbal, and clausal depending on what is missing:

a- Nominal
A. *I want to buy the blue dress.*
B. *I prefer the white [dress].*
b- Verbal

A. *Have you ever been skiing?*
B. *Yes, I have [been skiing].*
c- Clausal
A. *When did Tom arrive?*
B. *[Tom arrived] Last night.*

2.4 CONJUNCTION

A conjunctive element is rather different from reference, substitution and ellipsis in the sense that it is cohesive not in itself, but by the meaning it expresses (Van Dijk, 1972). This meaning presupposes the presence of another component in the discourse (ibid.). Conjunction is another type of semantic relation in which "what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 227). A conjunctive element can be:

a- Additive
E.g. *and, in addition, furthermore*
b- Adversative
E.g. *but, however, though*
c- Causal
E.g. *because, consequently, so*
d- Temporal
E.g. *then, subsequently, first, meanwhile*

3. LEXICAL COHESION

Lexical cohesion is a formal relation between parts of the vocabulary apart from any referential identity, but it can be found in contexts where there is an identity of reference (Leech & Short, 1981). Thus, the cohering lexical item is usually accompanied by 'the' or any other anaphoric reference item (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). An element is cohesive if it presupposes elements of its interpretation somewhere in the environment (ibid.). The item of interpretation has two kinds, which are reiteration and collocation.

3.1 REITERATION

Reiteration is a relation between two items related through the repetition of a lexical item, the use of a general word, a synonym to some extent (baby/child), or a superordinate (child/boy); with or without the reference item (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Thus, reiteration can be regarded as a semantic repetition on the ground that two repeated items have the same meaning, and synonyms, superordinate, or general nouns are synonyms to some extent in accordance with the level of

Halima Benzoukh. Cohesive Ties in English at a Glance // Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. T 3, №3, 2017

5

generality (ibid.). In other words, synonyms have nearly the same meaning in the same context, superordinates are related in meaning but not as synonyms, and general words are more general in the relation of synonymy. Next, repetition and synonymy are tackled.

a- Repetition

Repetition is the repeated occurrence of an expression that has already occurred in the relevant preceding or following part of the text (Van Dijk, 1972). The difference between two repeated items depends on the context in which they occur.

To evade repetition, reduction can be adopted (Leech & Short, 1981: 246). Reduction is used through third person pronouns, substitution, or ellipsis provided that it does not lead to ambiguity (ibid.). Hence, repetition can be used for syntactic and rhetorical reasons, and to avoid confusion.

b- Synonymy

The meaning of a lexical item is not constant (Van Dijk, 1972). From one context to another, the same lexical item may have different meanings. Synonymy is just one of the logical relations between words and between sentences (ibid.).

Synonymy is defined as 'mutual entailment' (Kempson, 1977: 40). It is a partial identification of one word or sentence by means of another word or sentence. Leech (1990: 74) defines synonymy as follows:

X is synonymous with Y

X has the same truth-value as Y: i.e. if X is true, Y is true; also if X is false, Y is false; and vice versa

Synonyms are accounted by one general role, 'the role of identification' (ibid: 261). Taking this role into account, each of the following pairs are considered as synonymous:

1 a. James is Jane's father.
1 b. Jane is James's daughter.
2 a. Jane's father is James.
2 b. James's daughter is Jane.

The notion of synonymy leads to the following questions: why should we have more than one lexeme to express one particular meaning? Isn't one lexeme per meaning sufficient? Crystal (1995) wonders about the use of more than one word for one meaning and he finds that there are no 'perfect synonyms', and each pair of synonyms can be differentiated by "a nuance which separates them, or a context in which one of the lexemes can appear but the other(s) cannot" (ibid: 164).

Synonyms can be separated by a dialect difference (autumn and fall are synonymous but autumn is British English and fall is American), or by a stylistic difference ('seek' and 'look for' are synonyms but 'seek' is formal and 'look for' is informal), or by a collocation difference (rancid and rotten are synonyms, but rancid is used only by butter or bacon and rotten is used for food and other substances), or by a difference of emotional feeling or connotation (child and babe are synonyms, but child is less pleasant than babe).

Synonyms are used to approach the exact meaning according to the context, geographical, social, and cultural differentiations, and connotation. One synonym can be used in one context or in some circumstances and not in others. For this reason, synonyms are useful.

3.2 COLLOCATION

Collocation is the association of one word with another from the preceding text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). The relation between the two items is a relation by means of repetition, synonymy, or occurrence in the same lexical environment (ibid.). This relation may be one of oppositeness (patient/practitioner), or antonymy (love/hate), or converses (punishment/sin), or a relation between sets of words, or a relation between part-to-whole (individual, society), or part-to-part (sin, guilt, crime), or co-hyponyms of the same general class. Collocation is independent of the grammatical structure. Its effect lies in bringing cohesive chains out of lexical relations between two or more items (Leech & Short, 1981). Firth introduces the notion of collocation as "an intermediate between the situational and the grammatical, which deals with lexical meaning i.e., with that part of the meaning of lexemes which depends, not upon their function in particular context-of-situation, but upon their tendency to co-occur in texts" (Lyons, 1977: 612). Firth considers collocation as the association of "synonyms and antonyms, lexical groups […] words grouped by

Halima Benzoukh. Cohesive Ties in English at a Glance // Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. Т 3, №3, 2017

6

common application in certain recurrent contexts of situation." (ibid.).

4. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, cohesion is the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different component parts of a text. It might exist within or between sentences. The ability to understand the different types of cohesion relationships is necessary for processing a text successfully. Also, the distinction between grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion is a matter of degree, and Halliday and Hasan (1976) suggested not going in the depth of these overlapping areas and that conjunction is on the borderline of the two types mainly it is grammatical but with the lexical component, so one cannot clearly distinguish between the two types. Cohesion is semantic relation between one element in the text and another element that is crucial for its interpretation. This other element must also be found within the text. Cohesion refers to the range of possibilities that exist for linking an element with what has gone before. It is a part of text forming component in the linguistics system. It links together the elements that are structurally unrelated through the dependence of one on the other for its interpretation. In fact, without cohesion the semantic system cannot be effectively activated.

References

1. Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in English].

2. Halliday, M.A.K and Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman. [in English].

3. Kempson, R. M. (1977). *Semantic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in English].

4. Leech, G. and Short, M. H. (1981). *Style in Fiction*. London: Longman. [in English].

5. Leech, G. (1990). *Semantics*. England: Pelican Books. [in English].

6. Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in English].

7. Van Dijk, T.A. (1972). "Some Aspects of Text Grammars". *Journal of Linguistics* 12(1). The Hague: Mouton (pp. 169-174). [in English].

Dr. Halima Benzoukh, Associate Professor, Kasdi Merbah University